



STATE OF WASHINGTON
GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF INDIAN AFFAIRS
1210 EASTSIDE ST, 1ST FLOOR • PO BOX 40909 • OLYMPIA WA 98504-0909
360/753-2411 • FAX 360/586-3653

For immediate release:
November 8, 2004

Contact: Kyle Taylor Lucas
Executive Director
(360) 753-2411

Governor Locke Signs Proclamation Declaring November 2004
American Indian Heritage Month:
State agencies host celebrations and events throughout November

American Indian Heritage Month was proclaimed by Gov. Gary Locke for the month of November to honor Washington State tribes, according to the Governor's Office of Indian Affairs. He emphasized the vital role and achievements the tribes play in the social, political and economic fabrics of this state. "This state joins others across the country in celebrating American Indian Heritage Month to reaffirm a national commitment to remember those contributions and to honor the unique heritage of this continent's First Peoples," the proclamation reads.

State agencies are sponsoring events throughout November that honor the 29 federally recognized tribes and American Indians from all nations residing within the state of Washington. Examples of celebrations include the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries (L&I), which celebrates with educational displays and a **Native American Film Festival** occurring throughout the month in the L&I rotunda. An *Honor Wall* is dedicated to American Indian Elders and another exhibit features the history of Chief Leschi and the *Treaty of Medicine Creek*. Also included in the celebration are the **Wa-He-Lut Dancing Turtles** on November 17. Kyle Taylor Lucas, Executive Director of the Governor's Office of Indian Affairs, and other tribal leaders will participate in a panel discussion "Current Concerns in Indian Country" as part of the L&I's Diversity Training event on November 18, 2004.

The Department of Personnel is showcasing the Governor's Office of Indian Affairs on its Workforce Diversity Program website at <http://hr.dop.wa.gov/wfd/oiaoffic.htm>. The Department of Health plans to display American Indian art, history, clothing, and music in their Tumwater buildings, as well as a featured performance by the Nisqually Tribe's **Wa-He-Lut Dancers**. The Department of Social and Health Services hosted a celebration and potluck on November 8 in Lacey with special guests, the **Wa-He-Lut** dancers, local basket weavers, tribal representatives, American Indian arts & crafts, fry-bread, and Indian tacos. Please contact these agencies directly or the Governor's Office of Indian Affairs for details regarding these events.

In 1990, former President George Bush approved a joint resolution designating November 1990 "National American Indian Heritage Month," in response to legislation presented by Sen. Daniel K. Inouye (D-HA) and Congressional Delegate Eni Faleomavaega (D-American Samoa). Celebration of American Indian Heritage Month has ensued since then. Washington State has the fifth largest tribal population in the country, and Washington State is viewed as a model for state/tribal relations, and the state and tribes lead the nation in progressive and innovative policy and methods. American Indian Heritage Month celebrates "the many contributions of American Indians [that] have enhanced freedom, prosperity and cultural diversity in this state." The 29 federally recognized tribes contribute about \$2 billion annually to the state's economy through tourism, natural resource industries and economic development enterprises.

Please contact the Governor's Office of Indian Affairs with any questions regarding events and celebrations or inquiries about the background and history of American Indian Heritage Month.

###